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Nov. 6. 1694. *Ra. Barker*, R. R. in Christo Patri ac D. D. *Joanni* Archiep. *Cant.* à Sacr. Domest.

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A

CONFERENCE

WITH AN

Anabaptiſt.

PART I.

Concerning the

Subject of BAPTISM.

Being a Defence of

Infant-Baptiſm.

By *William Aſſheton*, D. D. Rector of *Beckenham* in *Kent*, and Chaplain to his *Grace* the Duke of *Ormond.*

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TO MY

Loving Friends and Pariſhioners,

THE

INHABITANTS

OF

Beckenham *in* KENT.

THERE *being ſeveral* Antipædobaptiſts, *vulgarly called* Anabaptiſts, *or (as they pleaſe to call themſelves)* Baptiſts, *in this Pariſh; I am ſenſible it is my duty to endeavour their Conviction. In order whereunto I did deſire them to ſend me in Writing ſome of their beſt, and as they think, ſtrongeſt Reaſons,* Why they refuſe to baptize their Infants. *Accordingly one*

of them, with the Consent and Approbation of the rest, did send me the following Paper; which, together with my Answer, is here Transcribed verbatim.

THIS

For his very Loving Friend,

Dr. William Assheton,

Rector of *Beckenham.*

With Care I pray.

SIR,

After my Service presented to you, this is to let you understand, That by some late Conference or Discourse I have had with some of our Parishioners, That you are desirous to know our Reason, Why we do not Baptize our Infants. *To this Query I give this brief and short Answer,*

Anſwer, inſtead of many more, becauſe I write but badly, and in haſte at preſent; therefore pray accept of this Anſwer at preſent; for I can ſpeak more in a little time, than I can write in a great while. Therefore I give this brief, but plain Anſwer.

Firſt, Becauſe Chriſt the great Law-giver to the Goſpel-Church never commanded us to Baptize Infants; *Therefore* having no Warrant nor Command from the Goſpel, or Word of God, we dare not change nor alter the Commands and Ordinances of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *For if we ſhould Sprinkle Infants, inſtead of Baptizing of Believing Men and Women, we believe that we ſhould be guilty of breaking and violating of the Command and Law of Jeſus Chriſt. The which thing if we ſhould do, we do believe that we ſhould be guilty of high Preſumption, and much abuſe our own Conſciences, and wrong our own Souls; for though there was no more Vertue in the Waters of* Jordan, *than in them of* Damaſcus, *yet* Naaman *muſt keep to God's Command and Appointment, if he will be healed of his Leproſy,* 2 Kings 5. 10. *So we do believe*

that we are bound to keep to God's own Commands and Appointments, if we intend to have the Leprosy of our Sins done away by Faith in the Blood of Christ, and Obedience to his Commands: For it is impossible to please God without Faith, Heb. 11. *Therefore hath Christ commanded Believing Men and Women to be Baptized over and over, and again and again, by the Word of his Gospel. But I could never find one word, from the beginning of* St. Matthew, *to the end of the Revelations of* St. John *the Divine, that saith plainly*, Ye shall Sprinkle your Children; *no, nor that saith*, That ye shall Baptize your Infants. *And now, Sir, if you can find a way to prove Sprinkling or Baptizing of Infants, with your Godfathers and Godmothers, from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall humbly and heartily thank you for such a kindness: For if we might sprinkle our Infants, and be justified by the Word of God, it might be better for our Temporal Estate; for then our Neighbours would be ready to love us better than they do now; for now they count us the mean and pitiful fellows of the world, and the offscouring of the earth; and no Names, they think, are bad enough for*

us.

us. For you know that many have ſuffered very much both in Body and Goods, not many years ſince, for this very Caſe. Therefore, Sir, if you can find a way to prove this Point by the Word of God, it would be of great advantage to our Temporal Eſtate. But we muſt not wrong our Souls for the Things of this Life, and to pleaſe the World. So having no more at preſent, I reſt and remain,

Your Humble Servant to Command and Serve in what I can or may,

Aug. 11. 1693.

BEN. ADGATE.

THESE

THESE

For my Loving Friend,

Benjamin Adgate.

Good Neighbour,

I Have received your Letter, and therein your Reaſon, Why you do not Baptize your Infants. To which Scruple, through God's Aſſiſtance, I ſhall in ſome competent time return you a full, and, I hope, ſatisfactory Anſwer. But before I can attempt that Work, I muſt procure and peruſe the Confeſſions of your Faith, with ſome other Tracts of your Leading Men: Which will enlarge my Task, and make it the longer before I can finiſh what I do deſign. God grant you an humble and teachable ſpirit, willing to receive the Truth, and to confeſs your Miſtakes when they ſhall be diſcovered.

In the Cloſe of your Letter, you complain of want of Love in ſome of your Neighbours: I hope that Suggeſtion is groundleſs. As to my ſelf, I muſt acknowledge, Thoſe of your Perſuaſion in my Pa-

riſh,

riſh, have been very kind and loving Pa-riſhioners. And I hope I have not been wanting in Returns of Love and Kind-neſs to them. I moſt heartily pray for the greateſt Happineſs, both Temporal and E-ternal, to you all; who am,

Your Affectionate Paſtor,
and Servant for the ſake
of Jeſus,

Aug 14. 1693.

William Aſſheton.

After this, as my other Studies would permit, I applied my ſelf to the Examination of their Paper. And that I might fully inform both my Self and You, in the true State of this Controverſy, having firſt implored the Divine Aſſiſtance, I procured and peruſed the Publick Confeſſions of their Faith; as alſo no ſmall Number of their moſt Eminent and Noted Writers, viz. Tombes, Lawrence, Fiſher, A.R. D'anvers, Denn, Blackwood, Hammon, Dean, Keach, Collins, Kiffin, Goſnold, *&c. And I do here*

here ſolemnly declare; That after all this ſearch and inquiry (which hath not been ſlight or trivial) I am ſtill more and more confirmed in this Truth (which I ſhall expreſs in the words of the Church of England, *Art.* 27.) *viz.* **The Baptiſm of young Children is in any wiſe to be retained in the Church, as moſt agreeable with the Inſtitution of Chriſt.**

What I have here writ with the greateſt deliberation, will, I hope, be as ſeriouſly peruſed by our Diſſenting Brethren. And to encourage them to read it, I do faithfully aſſure them, I have not been afraid of an Objection, but have given their Scruples their full weight, and in every other inſtance have been juſt to their Cauſe: And have aſſiſted my Pariſhioner *to plead as ſtrongly for them, as the very beſt of their own Writers, and their own Words could direct me.*

The

The Scheme or Model of my Diſcourſe, is by way of Conference or Dialogue. Which is the moſt plain and familiar Method of Inſtruction. And I divide it into Two *Parts.*

In this Firſt *Part, I have only treated of the* Subject *of Baptiſm. And, I hope, have competently proved,* That Infants, as well as Adult Perſons, ought to be Baptized. *I have not only given my Reaſons why I thus affirm; but alſo have anſwered their chief Objections to the contrary.*

In the Second *Part of the* Conference *(which will make another diſtinct Treatiſe, to be publiſhed in due time) I ſhall examine the* Mode *and* Manner *of its Adminiſtration. And ſhall endeavour, through Divine Aſſiſtance, to convince them;* That it is not neceſſary, that Baptiſm ſhould be adminiſtred by Dipping.

And

And then, as an Appendix *to the Whole, I ſhall further vindicate the Conſtitution of the Church of* England, *in the Uſe and Office of God-fathers and God-mothers. And herein I ſhall diſcourſe with Mr.* Edward Paye *in particular; who hath lately publiſhed his Scruples againſt that Practice.*

And now (my good Pariſhioners) *You who are diſſatisfied about the Baptiſm of Infants; if you have any further Reaſons againſt that Practice, which have not yet been ſuggeſted to me; let me freely know your Scruples, and with God's aſſiſtance, I'll endeavour to remove them.*

And thoſe of you who are miſtaken about the Mode *and* Manner *of* Adminiſtration; *and who fancy* Dipping *or* Plunging *ſo neceſſary, that unleſs ſo Adminiſtred Baptiſm is null and void; Pray give me your Thoughts in Writing, and*

and you will then direct me how to ſatisfy your Doubts.

The God of Wiſdom guide us All by his Counſel here, and afterward receive us to Glory; Is the Prayer of

Your Affectionate Paſtor,

William Aſſheton.

A CON-

A CONFERENCE WITH AN Anabaptiſt.

Min. NEighbour, I am glad to ſee you. Pray ſit down; for I muſt have ſome Diſcourſe with you.

Par. Sir, I was told you ſent for me, and am come to know your Pleaſure.

Min. What I have to ſay is of the greateſt Concernment, and is in order to the Eternal Welfare of *you* and *yours*.

Par. Then, *Sir*, with ſubmiſſion, I gueſs your Buſineſs: For *by ſome late Conference or Diſcourſe*

I have had with ſome of our Pariſhioners, I underſtand that you are deſirous to know our Reaſon, Why we do not Baptize our Infants.

Min. I am indeed deſirous to know the Reaſons of ſuch your Neglect, that ſo I may return an Anſwer to them. And do earneſtly beg of God (who hath promiſed to give Wiſdom to thoſe who ask it), That what I ſhall now ſay, may not only confirm and ſatisfy the reſt of my Pariſh, but may alſo have ſome good effect upon you, who call your ſelves Baptiſts. Pray therefore tell me plainly, *Why do you refuſe to Baptize your Infants?*

Par. *To this Query I give this Brief but Plain Anſwer, inſtead of many more; Becauſe Chriſt the great Lawgiver to the Goſpel-Church, never commanded us to Baptize Infants. Therefore having no Warrant nor Command from the Goſpel or Word of God, we dare not change*

nor

nor alter the Commands and Ordinances of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Min. This then is your Reaſon.

Par. We have indeed ſeveral other Reaſons againſt Infant-Baptiſm, but this is the chief. For when thoſe who plead for Infant-Baptiſm do thus argue, *viz.* Children were Circumciſed, *Therefore* to be Baptized. Children are in Covenant, *Therefore* to be Baptized. Children are capable of Church-membership, *Therefore* to be Baptized. Children are Holy, *Therefore* to be Baptized. Children are capable of Salvation, and of the Kingdom of God, *Therefore* to be Baptized. I ſay, when you thus diſpute and argue for the Baptiſm of Infants, our *Baptiſt-Writers* do return this ſhort Anſwer to all theſe Arguments, *viz.* That they are inconſequent, and plain *Non ſequitur's.* 'Tis not enough for any to ſay, *If Children are in Covenant, they may be Baptized.*

Who tells them ſo? Hath Chriſt any where required it? Doth he ſay they ought, or that it belongs to them? V. *Keach* Gold refined *pag.* 102. *For it cannot be their Childrens Right, without Authority or Command from Chriſt. For if we ſhould grant all our Brethren ſay concerning* Abraham's *Seed, and of their Children being in Covenant; this will not juſtify their practice of Baptizing them, if they argue thus till Doomſday, except Chriſt hath left them a Precept, or his Church a Precedent ſo to do.* Id. p. 77. *And this is the Reaſon why Baptiſm is not to be applied unto Children, becauſe God hath not commanded it ſo to be applied. Vid.* H. Denn, *Antichriſt unmask'd*, p. 38. This is what we chiefly inſiſt upon. *And now, Sir, if you can find a way to prove this Point by the Word of God, we ſhall humbly and heartily thank you for ſuch a Kindneſs.*

Min.

Min. But will you then ſubmit, acknowledge your Error, and Baptize your Children?

Par. *We are bound to keep to God's own Commands and Appointments.* If therefore you can prove Infant-Baptiſm by the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, we will confeſs our miſtake, and Baptize our Infants. *Vid. Append. to Confeſ. of Faith*, p. 112.

Min. I am afraid you will not: For ſome mens Prejudices are ſo ſtrong, they will not ſubmit to the plaineſt Conviction. And therefore 'tis but trifling to call for Goſpel-Commands, when your Prejudice or your Fancy will not ſuffer you to obſerve them: As I could more particularly convince you (if the Digreſſion were not too large), in your neglecting the uſe of the *Lord's-Prayer*, and *Singing of Pſalms*; both which are commanded in the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Par. Pray, Sir, do not any longer ſuſpect our Sincerity: But ſhew us a Goſpel Precept for Infant-Baptiſm. Produce your Proof, and we are ready to hear it.

Min. What kind of Proof will convince you? Do you expect an expreſs Command? Or that I ſhould ſhew you a Place of Scripture, where Infant-Baptiſm is required *totidem verbis*, in theſe very words, *Ye ſhall baptize your Infants?* Will nothing leſs than this convince you?

Par. We do require a plain and expreſs Command. *But I never could find one word from the beginning of St* Matthew *to the end of the Revelations of St.* John *the Divine, that ſaith plainly, Ye ſhall Sprinkle your Children; no, nor that ſaith, That ye ſhall Baptize your Infants.*

Min. Theſe indeed are your own words. And to avoid Miſtakes,

ſtakes, this, I ſuppoſe, is what you intend by them; *viz.* That if I can ſhew you theſe very words in the Goſpel, *Ye ſhall ſprinkle your Children*; or, *Ye ſhall baptize your Infants*; then you will acknowledge your ſelves obliged to Baptize your Infants. But if upon the ſtricteſt reading of the whole N. Teſtament, I am not able to ſhew you theſe or the like words, then whatever elſe I can ſay, will be of no effect: For unleſs I can ſhew you a plain expreſs Command, you muſt ſtill think it unlawful to Baptize your Children. Is not this your meaning?

Par. *We affirm, That in all Poſitive or Inſtituted Worſhip (ſuch as Baptiſm is) which wholly depends upon the mere Will and Pleaſure of the Lawgiver, it is abſolutely neceſſary there ſhould be an expreſs Command, or plain and clear Examples; though in other reſpects we allow of natural Deductions and Conſequen-*

ces from Scripture. —— *But there is neither expreſs Command nor Example for Infant-Baptiſm.* Vid. Keach *Gold refined*, p. 146.

Min. As to *Example*, I ſhall examine the Obligation of *that* when you give me the occaſion. That which at preſent you require of me, is to ſhew you a *Command* for Infant-Baptiſm: And this Command you expect ſhould be an *expreſs* Command. But how unreaſonable, not to ſay impertinent, you are in ſuch expectation, I thus hope to convince you.

And *firſt*, It may a little abate your confidence to tell you, That what you ſo warmly inſiſt upon, hath ever been the practice of the greateſt Hereticks, in all Ages of the Church. Were I to diſcourſe with Scholars (who are capable to examine thoſe Ancient Writings) I could then ſhew you, That this Appeal to the expreſs Words of Scripture, was the very Artifice

Artifice of the firſt four grand Hereſies, condemned by the firſt four General Councils. The *Arians* did moſt earneſtly preſs, *That the word Conſubſtantial might be ſhewed in Scripture*; repeating this frequently, and canvaſſing about it invidiouſly. The *Macedonians*, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt, made this Objection, *That it was in no place of Scripture.* And *that it was no where written, That the Holy Ghoſt was God.* The *Neſtorians* denied the B. Virgin to have been the Mother of God; *Becauſe the Scriptures did no where mention it.* The *Eutychians*, who *confounded the Natures*, demanded, *In what Scripture were the Two Natures of Chriſt to be found?* And to deſcend to our own Times,

In a late Conference held about Religion, at *London*, Apr. 3. 1676. by *Two* (now) eminent Biſhops of our Church, with ſome Gentlemen of the Church of *Rome*; The

The Papiſts demanded; Where the Twenty Eighth Article of our Church, concerning the Lord's Supper, was read in Scripture? And in what place it was to be found? They vehemently called for *expreſs* Scripture, *p.* 3. And that there muſt be *no Interpretations admitted of*, p. 10. What Anſwers were then given to thoſe impertinent Clamors, 'tis not my buſineſs to repeat. I only mention theſe Paſſages to ſhew you, How in this you ſymbolize not only with the Ancient Hereticks, but alſo the very Papiſts (whom on all occaſions you pretend to diſown.) For as thoſe Papiſts required expreſs Scripture to prove the 28th Article of our Church, concerning the Lord's Supper; So you in like manner demand expreſs Scripture, to prove the 27th Article concerning Baptiſm.

Methinks, I ſay, the practice of theſe Ancient Hereticks and Modern

Modern Papiſts ſhould a' little abate your Confidence. And at leaſt ſhould incline you to ſuſpect, That this pretence of an expreſs Command (ſo inſultingly repeated by your Party) is more Pompous than Solid.

But if this general Reflection doth make no impreſſion, I ſhall then proceed to examine what may more ſenſibly affect you.

You affirm, *It is abſolutely neceſſary there ſhould be an expreſs Command for Infant Baptiſm.* Pray give me your Reaſon, why you thus affirm.

Par. Our Reaſon is this. Becauſe *nothing ought to be done in the Worſhip of God without expreſs Command in Scripture.* And *therefore,* ſince Baptiſm is a principal part of Divine Worſhip, it ought no otherwiſe to be adminiſtred than as God hath commanded. Conſequently, unleſs you can ſhew us an expreſs Command for the Baptiſm of our

our Infants, we dare not baptize them.

Min. Is nothing then to be done in the Worſhip of God without expreſs Command in Scripture? Is this your Principle? Why then do you *Anabaptiſts* contradict it by your Practice? How dare you *be guilty of ſuch high Preſumption*, as to obſerve and do ſo many things in the Worſhip of God, without expreſs Command in Scripture?

Par. Pray, Sir, do not wrongfully accuſe us. There is nothing which we obſerve and do, in the worſhip of our God, without expreſs Command in Scripture.

Min. We ſhall quickly try your Sincerity, by examining matter of Fact.

And *Firſt*, You are accuſed to reject the Obſervation of the Lord's Day. Is that ſo?

Par. *We*

Par. *We deny it. And the generality of thoſe that are againſt Infants Baptiſm, receive it; obſerve it with as due obſervation, as thoſe that accuſe them.* V. Blackwood Storming of Antichriſt, *P.2. p.52.*

Min. Since then you obſerve the *Lord's Day*, pray reſolve me; Why do you obſerve the *Firſt* Day of the Week, and not the *Seventh*, as the Chriſtian Sabbath? There is, you know, an expreſs Command for the Obſervation of the *Seventh* Day, *Exod.* 20.8, 9, 10. *But I never could find one word, from the beginning of St.* Matthew *to the end of the* Revelation *of St.* John *the Divine, that ſaith plainly, The Firſt Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. No nor that ſaith, Ye ſhall obſerve the Firſt Day to keep it holy.* What ſatisfaction can you give in this matter, according to your Principle?

Par. *For*

Par. *For the Jewiſh Sabbath once commanded by God, it is put to an end,* Coloſſ. 2. 16. *elſe it ſtands in force yet. And that being put to an end, we obſerve the Lord's Day from the Apoſtle's Example, and the morality of the Fourth Commandment; which requires one Day in Seven. V. Blackwood,* ut ſupra.

Min. But what's all this to an expreſs Command? You ſay,

1. *You obſerve the Lord's Day from the Apoſtle's Example.* But is the Apoſtle's Example a Rule for your Practice? *i. e.* Are you obliged to practiſe what the Apoſtles did? Then you muſt turn Levellers: Or, in Scripture Language, *have all things common. And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and ſold their Poſſeſſions and Goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need,* Acts 2. 44, 45. *And the multitude of them that believed were*

were of one heart, and of one ſoul: Neither ſaid any of them, that ought of the things which he poſſeſſed, was his own, but they had all things common, Acts 4. 32.

You ſee here a moſt plain and clear Example for community of Goods. But can you think your ſelves obliged, from this Example of the Apoſtles and Primitive Believers, to ſell your Eſtates, and diſtribute them to others, *as every man hath need?* Doubtleſs your poor Neighbours would be very well contented to ſhare with you. But your rich Landlords, who expect the payment of your Rents, would not like ſuch Proceedings.

Now if *all* Scripture Examples do not oblige (as moſt plainly appears from this Inſtance) then 'tis impertinent to urge the Apoſtles Example, as having the force of an *Expreſs* Command.

2*dly*, You affirm, *That you obſerve the Lord's-Day, from the Mora-*

Morality of the Fourth Commandment, which requires one Day in ſeven. By which expreſſion I ſuppoſe you denote this, *viz.* That the Reaſon of the *Fourth* Commandment doth thus far oblige us Chriſtians, That there ſhould be a ſet ſtated Time for Publick Worſhip; and that this Time ſhould not be leſs than *One* Day in *Seven.* This is the utmoſt you can denote by the *Morality* of the Fourth Commandment; *viz.* That *One* Day in *Seven* muſt be ſet apart for the Publick Worſhip of *God*: But that this *one* Day ſhould be the *Firſt*, and not the *Fifth* or the *Sixth*, &c. this is no part of the Morality of the Fourth Commandment. Now ſuppoſe a *Quaker* ſhould from hence object, That ſince the *Jewiſh* Sabbath is aboliſhed, or as you phraſe it, *put to an end*: And ſince you can give no expreſs Command for the obſervation, either of the *Firſt* Day, or

or any other; *Therefore* there ought to be no celebration of a Weekly Sabbath. What Anſwer would you return to this?

Par. *Anſw.* 1. *If there be no Command, there is no obſervation due.* Mat. 28. 20. *Teaching them to obſerve all things that I have commanded you.*

2. *But the Sabbath is commanded indeterminately in the Fourth Commandment, which commands us to obſerve the day of God's reſt. Now, being the firſt day of the Week is the day of God's reſt, we obſerve it, though not in ſuch a way as the Jews were wont to obſerve their Sabbath. Becauſe no Command can be brought to affix the reſt of the Jewiſh Sabbath on the Chriſtian Lord's-Day. Yet in ſuch a way we from the Command obſerve it, that in it we may have communion with God in Prayer, and Hearing, and Receiving the Supper, Meditation, Works of*

Charity, &c. *Vid.* Blackwood, *ut ſupra*, p. 54.

Min. What a confuſed, perplex'd, (not to ſay contradicting) Anſwer is this? But I ſhall not give you the trouble to explain or reconcile it. 'Tis ſufficient for my purpoſe to obſerve this Conceſſion, *viz.* That the Chriſtian *Sabbath*, or the Lord's Day, is *indeterminately* commanded in the Fourth Commandment. And if only *indeterminately*, (*i. e.* virtually and implicitely) then not determinately nor *expreſly*: And then you have granted, That there is no *expreſs* Command for the Obſervation of the Firſt Day of the Week, as the Chriſtian Sabbath. And conſequently, you confeſs (in oppoſition to your own admired Principle) *That ſomething may be done in the Worſhip of God, without expreſs Command in Scripture.*

But becauſe I obſerve you are ſtrangely fond of this Tenent, I ſhall

ſhall further convince you of the Falſeneſs of it in other Inſtances.

And here I muſt take the freedom to remind you, That *Anabaptiſts* have formerly been accuſed as Enemies to Government: That they diſown the Power of the Civil Magiſtrate: That they deny the Lawfulneſs of an Oath, *&c.* Are theſe things ſo?

Par. Indeed the *Munſter* Baptiſts are reported to have held ſome ſuch wild Doctrines; but we are ſince better enlighten'd; as appears from our *Confeſſion of Faith, London*, Printed 1652. The 49*th.* Article of which Confeſſion, *page* 11. is in theſe very words; *It is lawful for a Chriſtian to be a Magiſtrate or Civil Officer. And alſo it is lawful to take an Oath.*

Min. I am very glad you are ſo far reformed, as to renounce thoſe *Munſter* Deluſions. You ſay then, *It is lawful to take an Oath.* And I ſuppoſe you hold it lawful, *to lay*

your hand upon the Book, and *kiſs the Book.*

Par When we Swear, we do not refuſe to conform to cuſtom; but do as other men do.

Min. But how are theſe things conſiſtent with your forementioned *Tenent?*

And *firſt*, pray reſolve me, Where do you find in the Goſpel an expreſs Command to take an Oath?

A *Quaker* would tell you, That however it might be lawful under the *Old Teſtament*, yet an Oath is ſo far from being commanded in the *New Teſtament*, that it is expreſly forbidden, both by our B. Saviour, and his Apoſtle St. *James.* By our Saviour, *Matth* 5. 34. *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all.* By St. *James, chap.* 5. *ver.* 12. *But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not.* Here you may obſerve, an Oath is expreſly forbidden: But pray, where is it expreſly commanded? *Par.*

Par. All Swearing is not forbidden; but 'tis only vain and unneceſſary, raſh and prophane Swearing in ordinary Converſation, which is forbidden by our B. Saviour, and by St. *James*. Now beſides this prophane Roring (as it deſerves to be called) there is a Legal Judicial Swearing. Which is not only an Act of Religion (by which God is honoured, and the Divine Attributes acknowledged) but alſo of Juſtice and Charity, (by which Government is ſupported, and private Controverſies the moſt effectually determined). This Legal Judicial Swearing is ſo far from being forbidden as unlawful, that it is commanded in ſome caſes as neceſſary.

Min. Your Anſwer as to the Quakers is pertinent and convincing. But how do you anſwer your ſelf? Where is this Legal Judicial Swearing expreſly commanded?

Par. Can any Command be more expreſs than this, *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his Name*, *Deut.* 6. 13. Conſult likewiſe *Deut* 10. 20. *Iſa.* 45. 23. *Jer.* 4. 2.

Min. Theſe are only Old Teſtament Proofs, which perhaps may nothing concern us Chriſtians. For what was commanded under the *Old* Teſtament, may be forbidden in the *New*. As Circumciſion, for inſtance; which you find expreſly commanded in theſe words, *Every man-child among you ſhall be circumciſed.* — *And the uncircumciſed man-child, whoſe fleſh of his foreskin is not circumciſed, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my Covenant*, Gen. 17. 10, 14. And yet what was thus expreſly and peremptorily commanded in the Old Teſtament, is as ſeverely forbidden in the New. *Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt*

ſhall

ſhall profit you nothing, Gal. 5. 2. 'Tis as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, He who is circumciſed hath renounced his Chriſtianity. And why may not the Caſe be the ſame as to an Oath? I do therefore pertinently deſire you to reſolve me, Where is this Legal Judicial Swearing expreſly commanded in the New Teſtament?

But ſuppoſing an Oath were expreſly commanded, (thereby granting what you cannot prove) yet, pray, where are you commanded *to lay your hand upon the Book*, and *kiſs the Book*? What ſay you to this? —— You may well be ſilent. There's not one word of this in the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

And thus you are again convinced of the Falſeneſs of your Tenent. For if when you take an Oath (which is an Act of Divine Worſhip), you hold it lawful to lay your hand upon the Book, and

kiſs the Book (which are not commanded in Scripture); you do then confeſs, That ſomething may be done in the Worſhip of God, without expreſs Command in Scripture.

And here I might juſtly expoſtulate the partial Proceedings of you Anabaptiſts; and your uncharitable Cenſures of the Church of *England*. What Clamours have been raiſed againſt the uſe of Godfathers and Godmothers, and the Sign of the Croſs.

From the uſe of the firſt of theſe, how invidiouſly do you inſinuate, That the Church of *England* is no True Church. V. *H C. Reaſons for Separation from the Church of* England, *p.* 7. And as to the Croſs in Baptiſm, How ſeverely hath it been branded with Popery, Idolatry, Superſtition, and Will-Worſhip. But how unequal you are in ſuch Reflections, you your ſelves ſhall be Judges.

When

When we tell you of the Uſefulneſs of Godfathers and Godmothers (whoſe Pious Care and Inſtructions may ſupply the Neglect, or the Death of the Parents) you then think it ſufficient to reply, *That we cannot prove the uſe of Godfathers and Godmothers from the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* When we further tell you, that the Croſs in Baptiſm is a decent ſignificant Ceremony, you make this Anſwer, *But where is it commanded in the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt?*

Now if this be a ſufficient reaſon to reject theſe or any other Ceremonies, becauſe they are not commanded, pray anſwer me diſtinctly, How can you juſtify your own Practice? Are not laying the Hand upon the Book, and kiſſing the Book, as much Ceremonies as ſigning with the Croſs? Are they not as ſignificant, and as much impoſed? But where are they commanded

manded in Scripture? Pray therefore, for the future, learn to be more modeſt, and do not any longer cenſure the Church of *England*, for impoſing ſignificant Ceremonies; ſince this practice of yours, in laying your hand upon the Book and kiſſing the Book, doth either acquit the Church of *England*, or condemn your ſelves.

But I ſhall not enforce this miſtake any farther, but proceed in another Inſtance to ſhew you, That this Principle of yours (*That nothing ought to be done in the Worſhip of God, without expreſs Command in Scripture*) is moſt apparently contradicted by your Practice.

Par. Pray, Sir, in what other Inſtance can you pretend we contradict this Principle by our Practice?

Min. In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; which you adminiſter to Women, without expreſs Command

Command in Scripture. *'Tis no where ſaid, That Women received the Lord's Supper, yet 'tis given to them.*

Par. *To this we anſwer; That there is ground enough from the Scripture, for Women who are baptized Believers, to receive the Lord's Supper.* Let a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat, *ſaith the Apoſtle*; viz. *Man or Woman; for ſo the* Greek *word* Ανθρωπος, *ſignifies.* There is one Mediator between God and Man: *Is not Woman as well as Man intended there?* If there come into your Aſſembly a man having a Gold Ring, *&c.* A double-minded man is unſtable in all his ways. *Are not Women as well as Men comprehended and meant in thoſe Places, tho not expreſſed?*

2. *Were not Women as well as Men (who believed) baptized? Were not Women Diſciples, and commanded to be made Diſciples by the*

the Preaching of the Goſpel in the Commiſſion, as well as Men?

3. *Were not Women Members of the Church? and does not the Holy Supper belong to all Regular Members thereof?*

This ſufficiently proves Women received the Lord's Supper. Vid. Keach *Gold refined*, p. 161.

Min. Honeſt Neighbour, I moſt heartily thank you for this Anſwer, which is not only a full Reply to the moſt plauſible Objection of your Party, but doth alſo ſuggeſt undeniable Proofs for Infant-Baptiſm.

Par. What *Objection*, Sir, do you mean? And what Proofs for Infant-Baptiſm are ſuggeſted by this Anſwer? I doubt not but *you* have ſuggeſted more than you are able to prove.

Min. Have a little Patience, Good Neighbour, for I cannot ſay all at once. Lay aſide your Prejudice, and you will eaſily apprehend me. Your

Your chief and moſt plauſible Objection againſt Infant-Baptiſm (which I ſhall repeat in your own words) is this; *Chriſt the great Lawgiver to the Goſpel-Church, never commanded us to baptize Infants: Therefore having no Warrant nor Command from the Goſpel or Word of God, we dare not baptize them.* This is your great Objection. To which we return this plain Anſwer.

'Tis granted, That there is no *expreſs* Command in the Goſpel for Infant-Baptiſm; but there is a *virtual, implicit*, and *conſequential* Command. And therefore, tho there is no *expreſs* Command, yet there is ſufficient *Warrant*; or (in Mr. *Keach*'s words), *There is ground enough from the Scripture* for Infant-Baptiſm; *for are not Infants comprehended and meant in ſuch and ſuch Places of Scripture, as well as Men and Women, tho not expreſſed?*

And

And whereas you object, That to allow any thing to be done in the Worſhip of God without expreſs Command in Scripture, is to derogate from the Perfection of the Scripture: To this we anſwer in the words of the Church of *England*, Art. 6. *Holy Scripture containeth all things neceſſary to Salvation; ſo that whatſoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it ſhould be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to Salvation.*

And therefore, Though Infant-Baptiſm is not *read expreſly* in the Scripture; *i. e.* Though you do not find theſe very words, *Ye ſhall baptize your Infants*; yet if Infant-Baptiſm *can be proved thereby*, we have then ſufficient *Warrant* for that Practice. At leaſt, we have as good Warrant as you *Baptiſts* have for communicating your Women.

men. For when we demand of you, Where are you commanded to Adminiſter the Lord's Supper to Women? You anſwer; *There is ground enough from the Scripture ſo to do.* So ſay we; *There is ground enough from the Scripture* to baptize Infants. And therefore if it is lawful to *communicate Women* (without an expreſs Command) becauſe, *There is ground enough from Scripture*; It is likewiſe lawful to *baptize Infants* without an expreſs Command, becauſe *there is ground enough from Scripture ſo to do.*

But after all theſe Scruples (ſo great is the Power of Truth) you your ſelves have confeſſed; That it is ſufficient evidence, if we can prove Infant-Baptiſm by neceſſary conſequence.

Par. Pray, who tells you this?

Min. A noted Writer of yours. Mr. *H. Denne*, in theſe words.

How

How often ſhall we tell them, That if they bring us either Command or Example by neceſſary conſequence, we will belive them. V. *Antichriſt Unmask'd*, p. 31. From this Conceſſion of Mr. *Denne* (which the evidence of Truth hath wreſted from you) I thus argue; Infant-Baptiſm hath been proved by neceſſary conſequence from the Scripture; *Therefore* you are obliged (unleſs you will deny your own words) to admit and believe it.

Par. *Natural Conſequences from Scripture we allow, but ſuch which flow not naturally from any Scripture we deny. What Commiſſion our Brethren have got, who ſprinkle Children, I know not. Let them fetch a thouſand Conſequences, and unwarrantable Suppoſitions for their Practice, it ſignifies nothing*, Vid. *Gold Refined*, pag. 69.

Min. You would infer from hence, That our *Conſequences* are

unwar-

unwarrantable Suppoſitions. But 'tis only in the opinion of thoſe who are prejudiced againſt them. Who are either ignorant, and cannot; or obſtinate, and will not underſtand them. Let me therefore once more deſire you to lay aſide your Prejudice; and then, through Divine Aſſiſtance, I'll endeavour to convince you (not by *unwarrantable Suppoſitions*, but by *natural* and *neceſſary Conſequences* from the Scriptures) that it is not only lawful, but alſo your duty, to baptize your Infants. And, becauſe I deſign to be as brief as poſſible, I will only inſiſt on this *One* Argument, *viz.*

All thoſe who ought to be admitted Viſible Church-members, ordinarily ought to be baptized.

But ſome Infants ought to be admitted Viſible Church-members.

Therefore, *Some Infants ordinarily ought to be baptized.*

This Argument doth consist of *Two* Premises and a Conclusion. And when I have confirmed the Premises, the Conclusion will then undeniably follow by natural and necessary Consequence, That *some Infants ordinarily ought to be baptized.* Let us now strictly examine this matter.

The *first* Proposition, or (as Logicians call it) the *Major*, is this.

All those who ought to be admitted Visible Church-members, ordinarily ought to be baptized. Do you deny this Proposition, or do you grant it?

Par. *I grant that Baptism is the way and manner of solemn admission into the Church, meaning the regular way.* V. *Tombes* Apolog. *p.* 54.

Baptism is an initiating Ordinance. No regular or orderly coming into the Church of God but at this Door. —— *And that Baptism is an initiating Ordinance we have all Christians of all Persuasions one with*

us

us. They generally aſſert the ſame thing, V. *Keach.* Gold Refined, p. 174, & 177. *And all agree in this that I have met with; That Baptiſm is the initiating Ordinance into the Church. And hence it was they ſet their Font at the lower end of the Church. Having this notion right, that Baptiſm made them Members of the Church. I ſhall conclude this Particular with an Argument of Mr.* BAXTER's,

'*If there be neither Precept nor* '*Example of admitting Church-*' *members in all the New Teſtament,* '*but by Baptiſm; then all that are* '*now admitted ought to come in by* '*Baptiſm: But there is neither Pre-*'*cept nor Example of admitting* '*Church-members in all the New Te-*'*ſtament, but by Baptiſm: There-*'*fore they ought to come in the ſame* '*way now. Thus you ſee, That Baptiſm is the Door of entrance into the Viſible Church, and that the Right of Memberſhip comes in by*

vertue of their Baptiſm. V. *Goſnold.* Doctrine of Baptiſms, *p.* 47, 48.

This Argument of Mr. *Baxter* is likewiſe more fully repeated by *W. Kiffin* in *A Sober Diſcourſe of Right to Church Communion*, pag. 89. And he alſo acknowledgeth that it is an Argument of great force and ſolidity.

Min I hope then you will grant the *Major*, or the *firſt* Propoſition, viz. *All thoſe who ought to be admitted Viſible Church-members, ordinarily ought to be baptized.*

Par. I muſt grant it.

Min. What ſay you then to the *Minor*, or the *Second* Propoſition, viz. *But ſome Infants ought to be admitted Viſible Church-members.* Do you likewiſe grant this Propoſition?

Par. No, I deny it.

Min. Then I muſt prove it. And that my Proof may be plain and convincing, I think it proper

firſt

firſt to inquire, Whether you underſtand the Terms of the Propoſition, and do rightly apprehend, what it is to be admitted a Viſible Church member.

Par. I hope you do not think me ſo ignorant, but that I underſtand what it is to be a Member of the Church. He who knows what it is to be a Member of a *Family*, of a *Corporation*, or of any other *Society*, by a parity of reaſon will likewiſe apprehend what it is to be a Member of a Church. He who enjoys the Priviledges and Franchiſes of any Corporation, and is admitted in the uſual form and manner of Admiſſion, ſuch a perſon is properly a Member of ſuch a Corporation. And ſo it is in any other Society.

Min. I ſuppoſe then you will grant, That he who hath a Right and Title to the Bleſſings and Promiſes of the Goſpel, ſuch a perſon ought to be acknowledged as a

Member of that Spiritual Society we call the Church. And consequently, *To be admitted a visible Church-member*, may thus briefly be explained, *viz.*

It is to be publickly and solemnly received into that Spiritual Society, that Body and Number of persons which God hath chosen, and called and separated from the rest of the world, as his Covenant People and Children, to learn the true Religion, in order to the partaking of those spiritual and eternal Blessings by Christ, which he hath promised in the Covenant of Grace. V. *Ollyffe's* Defence of Infant-Baptism, *p.* 6.

From hence you may observe, That two things are required of all those who are admitted visible Church-members.

1. That they be enter'd into Christ's School; there to be taught their Duty, and to learn true Religion.

2. That

2. That being thus enter'd into Chriſt's School, they partake of its Priviledges, *viz.* Of the Protection, and Proviſion, and Inſtruction of their Maſter. They are under his Charge and Diſcipline. They are devoted to Learning, if they live and are capable of it. And being thus *received into the Congregation of Chriſt's flock*, they are publickly owned and acknowledged to be Chriſtians, and as ſuch have a right and title to thoſe Spiritual Bleſſings which Chriſt hath promiſed to his peculiar Covenant-people.

This, I hope, you competently underſtand.

Par. I think I do.

Min. Then I ſhall endeavour to convince you, That *ſome Infants ought* thus *to be admitted viſible Church-Members.* And I prove it thus.

If no Infants ought to be admitted viſible Church-Members,

then the Reaſon why they ought not to be admitted, is either,

1. *Becauſe Infants are not capable to be admitted viſible Church-Members.* Or elſe,

2. *Becauſe it is not any benefit and advantage to Infants ſo to be admitted.* Or elſe,

3. If it ſhall be granted, that Infants are *capable*, and if it is a *benefit* and *advantage* ſo to be admitted; if, I ſay, notwithſtanding this capacity and advantage, Infants ought not to be admitted viſible Church-Members; *Then* the Reaſon why they ought not ſo to be admitted, can be no other than this; *viz.* Becauſe *Chriſt the great Lawgiver to the Goſpel Church hath declared he will not admit them.*

But none of theſe Particulars can be affirmed. Therefore *ſome Infants ought to be admitted viſible Church-Members.*

Let us now examine theſe Pretences in their order.

And

And *firſt*, Can you pretend, That *Infants are not capable to be admitted viſible Church-Members?*

Par. They are not capable.

Min. Pray anſwer me this ſhort Queſtion, Were not Infants Members of the *Jewiſh* Church?

Par. *That Children were admitted Members of the* Jewiſh *Church, is granted.* Vid. *Keach* Gold refin'd, *p.* 113.

Min. Why then are they not likewiſe capable to be admitted Members of the Chriſtian Church?

Par. Becauſe *Infants are not capable of the Qualifications of Goſpel Church-Memberſhip; being wholly uncapable of being taught and made Diſciples by taking up Chriſt's Croſs and following him, alſo of Self-Examination. In the Covenant of Peculiarity made with* Abraham, *the Infant Church Members were wholly Paſſive, in ſuffering the ſign of the Covenant under the Legal Oeconomy. But Members of a Goſpel Church*

Church are active. The Corinthians *gave themselves first to God, and then to the Apostles, by the will of God, in a Church State. In a Gospel Church they are initiated after Conversion, or at least a Profession of it. But Infant Church-membership no-wise agrees to a Gospel Church State, who are said to be sanctified in Christ Jesus, Saints by calling, holy Brethren, living Stones, Christ's Spiritual Temple, and House of God, V. H. Collins* Antidote, *p.* 14. *The Houshold of God is called the Houshold of Faith, or a Family that consisteth of Believers; therefore unless you can prove Infants to be Believers, they are not of this House,* Vid. *Keach* Gold refined, *p.* 115.

If those only are accounted fit to be Members of a Gospel Church, that are able to shew forth the praises of him that hath called them, then Infants of seven or eight days old (who cannot shew forth God's Praises,

ſes, as aforeſaid) are not fit to be Members of a Goſpel Church. — *Becauſe there is to be none in Chriſt's Vineyard* (viz. *Church*) *but ſuch as are Labourers; the which a Child of ſeven or eight days old cannot do; and therefore not fit to be Members of Chriſt's Church. But if the Goſpel Church did only look for a fair ſhew in the fleſh, as Memberſhip in the Church under the Law, then Children might either be circumciſed, or have their bodies waſhed according to the carnal waſhings, and ſo might be clean. But Memberſhip in a Goſpel-Church is of another nature; that requireth cleanneſs within, the heart to be purified by Faith, and the tongue ſpeaking forth God's Praiſe.* *Now *ſeeing there are ſo many Qualifications required individually to Goſpel Church-Memberſhip, your task is to prove, that Infants have them, or give up the Cauſe.* Vid. G. *Hammon* Sion's Redemption, *p.* 37, *and* 50. And **H. Collins*, ut ſupra, *p.* 15. *Min.*

Min. As much as you triumph in theſe kind of Harangues, did you either conſider the Nature of Church-memberſhip, or the different Capacities of Church-Members, you would not talk at this confident rate. To convince you of your miſtake, I muſt repeat your Objection.

Infants, ſay you, *are not capable of the Qualifications of Goſpel Church-memberſhip* (viz. *of Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, of taking up Chriſt's Croſs, and following him, alſo of Self-examination*, &c. *Vid.* Collins *ut ſupra*), Therefore *they are not capable to be admitted Church-members.*

This is your Argument. In anſwer to which, I deny both the *Antecedent* and the *Conſequent.*

And *firſt*, I deny the *Antecedent.* For tho there are ſome Qualifications (particularly thoſe by you mentioned) of which Infants are not capable, yet there are others of

of which they are. And therefore for that reaſon I do alſo deny your *Conſequent*: And affirm, that in ſome reſpect Infants are capable to be admitted Goſpel Church members; tho indeed it muſt be granted, that there are ſeveral Conditions of Church-membership wholly inconſiſtent with their Infant-State.

But that I may diſtinctly explain this matter, I muſt remind you, That there are *two* things contain'd in the Notion of Church-membership.

1. *Privileges* and *Bleſſings*, Covenanted on *God*'s part.

2. *Service* and *Obedience*, promiſed and vowed on *Man*'s part. *I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a People*, Heb. 8. 10.

I muſt further remind you, That there are *two* ſorts of Church-members under the Goſpel, as well as under the Law.

1. *Pri-*

1. *Primary* and *more Principal*, *viz.* Adult Perſons, Men and Women; who in your Language are not only *Paſſive*, but *Active* Church-members: Who are not only capable to enjoy the Privileges, but alſo to perform the Duties and Conditions of Church-memberſhip. But beſides theſe, there are

2. A *Secondary* or *leſs Principal*, or more imperfect Church-members. Such are Infants or Children; as alſo ſome Adult Perſons, who being born deaf and dumb, are incapable of Inſtruction. All theſe are only *Paſſive*; capable indeed to receive ſuch Privileges and Favours as a kind and indulgent Father ſhall beſtow upon them; but not capable as yet, (by reaſon of their tender Age, and ſome other Defects) either of Faith or Repentance, or any active Service or Obedience.

It

It muſt indeed be granted, That *Adult Perſons* (Men and Women) were the *firſt* and *principal* Church-members; I ſay, Adult Perſons are the *Primary* Subject of Church-membership; for the Goſpel was firſt preached to thoſe *who had ears to hear*; *i. e.* who were capable to receive and embrace it. And conſequently when you read in the Goſpel, of new Converts *receiving the word with gladneſs*; *of continuing ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine and Fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers*: When you read of ſuch and ſuch (as of the *Samaritans*; the *Eunuch*, Acts 8. the *Jailor*, Acts 16.) that they did firſt Believe and Repent, and then by Baptiſm were admitted Church-members; ſuch Paſſages as theſe are only to be applied to Adult Perſons, Men and Women of Capacity and Underſtanding; but cannot in the leaſt concern Infants or Children,

Children, who are incapable of them.

But becauſe ſuch Miſapplication is the grand fundamental miſtake of your Party, for your Conviction I muſt deſire you to conſider, That the meaning of all ſuch indefinite expreſſions is to be judged of from the nature and capacity of thoſe perſons to whom they are ſpoken: *e. g.* 'Tis an Apoſtolical Command, *That if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat*, 2 Theſ. 3. 10.

Now ſuppoſe ſome brainſick Enthuſiaſt ſhould thus argue; *Infants cannot work*, therefore *they muſt not be fed. Old, impotent, and bedrid perſons cannot work*, therefore *they muſt ſtarve.* What anſwer would you make to ſuch wild Inferences as theſe?

Par. I would anſwer, That this Text doth only forbid the relief of idle Lubbers and lazy Drones, who *can* work, but *will* not. But it

it doth not prohibit the Relief of Children, or ſuch weak and Aged Perſons as *cannot* work.

Min. You have now anſwered your ſelf; for as 'tis plain, the Apoſtle did require *working* only of thoſe that were able to work, but not of thoſe that were unable. In like manner 'tis apparent, That *Faith*, *Repentance*, and *Obedience*, are only required of Adult Perſons who are able to perform them; but not of Infants, who are incapable of them.

I hope you your ſelf now begin to apprehend the weakneſs of your Objection; and for your further Conviction I ſhall repeat your Argument once more, *viz. Infants are not capable to receive the word with gladneſs, —to believe, —to repent* (*as the firſt Goſpel-Converts did*) Therefore *they are not capable to be admitted Church-members:* I ſay, thus to argue, is weak and fallacious; and the Reaſon is this,

Becauſe theſe Qualifications now mentioned, are not eſſentially conſtitutive of Church-membership in general; or to ſpeak more intelligibly, they are not required of all ſorts of Church-members, but only of one *ſpecies* or kind of them, *viz.* of Adult Perſons, who are able to perform them. But as for Infants, they are to be received as Church members on another account; even from the Grace and Favour of God, who hath eſtabliſhed his Covenant with the Faithful, not only in their own Perſons, but with their Seed after them.

Thus he covenanted with *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful; *I will eſtabliſh my covenant between me and thee, and thy ſeed after thee, in their generations, for an everlaſting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy ſeed after thee*, Gen. 17. 7. And thus alſo *Moſes* did enter and engage *all* the People of *Iſrael* into Covenant

Covenant with God; *the little ones*, as well as others, *Deut.* 29. 10, 11, 12, 13. *Ye ſtand this day*, &c.

Par. You need not repeat the words: I readily grant, that Infants under the Law were capable of being in Covenant, and to be admitted Church-members.

Min. And I as pertinently repeat my Demand, Why then are they not as capable to be admitted Church-members under the Goſpel?

Par. I have given you the reaſon in theſe words, *viz.* That *the Church under the Law did only look for a fair ſhew in the fleſh* (by having the Mark of Circumciſion imprinted in the fleſh, of which Infants were capable as well as Adult Perſons); *but Memberſhip in a Goſpel Church is of another nature, that requireth cleanneſs within*; ——*the heart to be purified by Faith*; of which Infants are not

capable; *Vid.* G. Hammon *Sion's Redemption*, p. 50.

Min. If therefore upon examination it ſhall appear, that the Church under the Law did require *cleanneſs within*, (as you phraſe it) and *the heart to be purified by Faith* (of which you ſay Infants are not capable), *Then* Infants were as uncapable, with reſpect to theſe qualifications, to be Church-members under the Law, as under the Goſpel. *Conſequently* ſome other Reaſon (beſides theſe Perſonal Qualifications now mention'd) muſt be aſſigned for their admiſſion as Church-Members under both Diſpenſations.

Par. I deny that the Church under the Law *did require cleanneſs within*; —— *the heart to be purified by Faith.* Firſt make your Proof, and then raiſe your Inferences from it.

Min.

Min That *cleanneſs within*, or *cleanneſs and purity of the heart*, was required of the *Jewiſh* as well as Goſpel Church-members, is undeniably proved from theſe following Scriptures.

To what purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me? ſaith the Lord. ——*Bring no more vain oblations.* ——*Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes*, Iſa. 1. 11, 13, 16. *Who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord? he that hath clean hands and a pure heart*, Pſal. 24. 3, 4. *Create in me a clean heart, O God*, Pſal. 51. 10. *Rent your heart, and not your garments*, Joel 2. 13. *Circumciſe therefore the foreskin of your heart*, Deut. 10. 16. *And the Lord thy God will circumciſe thine heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou may'ſt live*, Deut. 30. 6. *Circumciſe your ſelves to the Lord, and*

take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jeruſalem, Jer. 4. 4. *Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will puniſh all them which are circumciſed, with the uncircumſed; Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmoſt corners, that dwell in the wilderneſs; for all theſe nations are uncircumciſed, and all the houſe of Iſrael are uncircumciſed in the heart*, Jer. 9. 25, 26. *For circumciſion verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumciſion; ——for he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly: neither is that circumciſion, which is outward in the fleſh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumciſion is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not in the letter, whoſe praiſe is not of men, but of God*, Rom. 2. 25, 28, 29. *Circumciſion is nothing, and uncircumciſion*

is

is nothing but the keeping the commandments of God, 1 Cor. 7. 19.

From theſe places of Scripture it undeniably appears, That the Church under the Law *did not only look for a fair ſhew in the fleſh* (as you pretend) but it likewiſe did require *cleanneſs within*, and *the heart to be purified with faith*. The *Jews* were not only to circumciſe the foreskin of their fleſh, but the foreskin of their hearts; and they who neglected this Circumciſion of the heart, in the Lord's eſtem, were as uncircumciſed.

St. *Paul* doth plainly inſtruct us, That *Circumciſion is nothing*, that it profiteth nothing, without *keeping of the Commandments*. From hence I demand, and pray anſwer me directly;

Could a *Jewiſh* Infant, at eight days old, circumciſe the heart? Or, could it be able at thoſe tender years to keep the Commandments?

Par. No, it could not.

Min. Then the Circumciſion of ſuch an Infant (which could not circumciſe the heart, nor keep the Commandments) was nothing; it profiteth nothing; it was as uncircumciſion. Or, in your Language, it was Mock-circumciſion; a *Baby-circumciſion*; meer nullity and fiction. For the whole Action was done without the Child's knowledge or conſent. Which was ſo far from knowing any thing of the matter, that it may be was faſt aſleep, till awakened by the ſharpneſs of the Knife. V. *Edw. Paye*'s Juſt Reply, *p.* 40. And then was ſo far from conſenting to the Action, that it ſhewed its diſlike by crying. V. *Edw. Paye*'s Apol. *p.* 6. Now pray reſolve me, How could a *Jewiſh* Infant be made a Member of the Church without its knowledge or conſent? V. *Paye*'s Reply, *p.* 9. Anſwer diſtinctly to theſe things, and

and then obſerve what I have further to ſay.

Par. 'Tis granted, That an Infant of eight days old could not circumciſe the heart, nor keep the Commandments. It could neither believe with the heart, nor confeſs with the mouth, whilſt it continued in that Infant ſtate. But it was obliged to perform theſe Duties when it came to years of diſcretion, and was adult.

Min. But how can a Child of eight days old be obliged? What Promiſe can it then make?

Par. A formal and verbal Promiſe it cannot poſſibly make before it can ſpeak and underſtand; but a vertual and Interpretative Promiſe it may.

Min. What do you mean by this virtual Interpretative Promiſe?

Par. The very Action of Circumciſion was a Promiſe, and obligation to obedience. *I teſtify again*

again to every man that is circumciſed, that he is a debtor to do the whole law, Gal. 3. 5. If therefore the circumciſed Infant, when it came to years of diſcretion, and was inſtructed in the nature and reaſon of its circumciſion, if it then did circumciſe the heart (which the circumciſion of the fleſh did ſignify, and repreſent and oblige it to) if it then paid an homage and obedience as one of *his* people; then the Lord would confirm and ratify *his* part of the Covenant in being its God. But if when the Child came to years of diſcretion (and was capable to know and perform theſe things with the aſſiſtance of Divine Grace) if it then did neglect to circumciſe the heart, to mortify its corrupt Affections, and did refuſe to keep the Commandments of God; *Then* its *circumciſion* was *uncircumciſion*; it profited nothing.

Min.

Min. You have given me a very plain and rational Account of *Infant-circumciſion*, and *Church-memberſhip* under the *Law*. Let us now turn the Tables; and you have given as good an account of *Infant-baptiſm* and *Church-memberſhip* under the *Goſpel*. And what you have now ſaid may convince you, That the Child of a Chriſtian is as capable in its infancy to be admitted a Member of the Chriſtian Church by Baptiſm, as the Child of a Jew was to be circumciſed at eight days old, and by ſuch Circumciſion to be admitted a Member of the Jewiſh Church.

And this, I hope, ſhall yet more fully appear, by examining the *Second* Particular, which I thus propoſe, *viz.*

Can you pretend, That it is no benefit or advantage to Infants to be admitted Church members under the Goſpel?

Par.

Par. Doubtleſs *Goſpel-Church-memberſhip* is a very great advantage. But I deny that it is any advantage to Infants, becauſe they are uncapable of it.

Min. The *Capacity* of Infants hath already been examined; and needs not any further repetition. To deal fairly and Scholar-like with me, you ought now (under this ſecond Topick) to ſuppoſe it. However, to let you ſee how deſirous I am of your conviction, I ſhall not only prove, That Church-memberſhip under the Goſpel is a great advantage; but alſo that it is ſuch an advantage as Infants are capable of.

Now to make this plain and intelligible, you muſt again conſider what it is to be a Goſpel-Church-member.

It is to be in covenant with God. And as one of his Covenant people, to be adopted, and taken into God's Family. And by being thus taken into

into his Family (the Church) 'tis to have a title to theſe following Bleſſings.

1. *Pardon of ſin in this life.*
2. *An Eternal Inheritance, and portion of Glory in the next.*

And are not Infants capable of theſe Priviledges and Bleſſings?

Par. No, they are not.

Min. I'll convince you that they are by enumerating Particulars.

And *firſt*, Are not Infants capable under the Goſpel *to be in covenant with God?*

Par. They are not capable whilſt they are Infants.

Min. Are not all Chriſtians in covenant with God?

Par. That muſt be granted.

Min. And are not Infants of believing Parents Chriſtians?

Par. They *may* be Chriſtians.

Min. So may *Jews* or *Turks*, when they embrace the Faith, and make profeſſion of Chriſtianity, *they may be Chriſtians.* That's no

no Anſwer to my Queſtion. For I do not ask what your Infants *may* be, but what they *are*. Are they *Jews* or *Mahumetans*?

Par. They are neither.

Min. If your Infants are neither *Jews*, nor *Turks*, nor *Chriſtians*, then they are *Heathens*. For I know not elſe what to call them. And if *Heathens*, then the Apoſtle will admoniſh you what a ſad condition they are in. They are *without Chriſt*, *ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe*, *having no hope*, *and without God in the world*, Eph. 2.12. In ſhort, The Infants of Chriſtian Parents are either *in the Church*, or *out of the Church*. If they are in the Church, *Then* they are Church-members, (and as ſuch are in Covenant.) And ſo you grant what I contend for. And if they are Church-members, *Then* according to your own Confeſſion, Infants are to be baptized. And thus the Controverſy is at an end.

end. But if Infants are out of the Church; *Then*, Since *out of the Church there is no Salvation*, Acts 2. 47. Infants are not capable of Salvation. And is this your Charity for your Infants? Will you only leave them like a Company of Heathens, to the general mercy of God (who may ſave them if he pleaſeth, by ways unknown to you) without any diſtinct certain Hope of their future State? Is this all your care and concern for them? But to proceed,

2dly, Are not Infants capable *to be adopted, and taken into God's Family?*

Par. No, they are not.

Min. Are not Infants capable of *Civil* Adoption, and of being admitted into any Family, or College or Hoſpital, for their preſent Support and Maintenance, and future Education and Inſtruction?

Par. Doubtleſs they are.

Min. Why then are they not as capable

capable of *Spiritual* Adoption, and of being admitted into God's Family, the Church?

Par. Becauſe *the Houſhold of God is called the Houſhold of Faith, or a Family that conſiſteth of Believers; Therefore, unleſs you can prove Infants to be Believers, they are not of this Houſe,* Vid. *Keach, p.* 115.

Min. If you will acknowledge none to be Believers, but only thoſe who have actual Faith, then it muſt be granted that Infants in that ſenſe, are not Believers. For they can no more Believe then they can ſpeak or diſcourſe, or in any other Inſtance exerciſe their Reaſon. But the words *Believers* and *Faithful* are of a larger extent; and may very truly and properly be applied to ſuch as have the Priviledges of Believers, though as yet they are not capable of Actual Faith.

For as Infants before they can ſpeak

Speak or exerciſe their Reaſon, are called *Rational*, are eſteemed and treated as *Rational Creatures*, and not as *Brutes*: In like manner, our Gracious God (who hath promiſed to be a God to the Faithful, not only in their own Perſons, but alſo to their Seed) doth for the ſake of the Faithful Parents, accept of their Infants as *Faithful*, and doth eſtimate them as *Believers*, and doth beſtow the Priviledges of *Faithful* and *Believers* upon them. And therefore, I ſay, as an Infant is a *Rational Creature* before it can exerciſe its Reaſon; in like manner, an Infant may be a *Believer*, before it is capable of actual Faith. In ſhort; Though Infants of Believing Parents, are not *actual* Believers, yet they are Believers in God's eſteem and acceptation.

If your Prejudice will not yet ſuffer you to receive this Truth, I muſt then inform you; That

this was the Doctrine of that faithful Martyr Mr. *John Philpot*, in these Words. *Christ calleth such as be not able to confess their Faith, Believer's; because of his meer Grace he reputeth them for Believers.* ——*For we judge the People of God, as well by the free and liberal Promise of God, as by the Confession of Faith: For to whomsoever God promiseth himself to be their God, and whom he acknowledgeth for his, those no man without great impiety may exclude from the number of the faithful: But God promiseth, that he will not only be the God of such as do profess him, but also of Infants* (who cannot yet Profess him) *promising them his Grace and remission of Sins*, V. Book of Martyrs, 3. *Vol. p.* 606. *Lond* 1641. I hope this Testimony is full and convincing, and that you will not be so impertinent as to suggest, That this Eminent Martyr (who Sealed the Truth of the Protestant Religion

gion with his Blood, and was Burned in *Smithfield*) was *an Advocate for the Church of* Rome; or, in the modern Style, was *Popiſhly affected.*

Now that Children may be eſteemed Believers; and as ſuch taken into God's Family together with their Parents, may be further explained; by conſidering the like proceedings in Civil Affairs.

In the Act of *Naturalization* of *Foreign Proteſtants*, the Parents only do take the *Oaths* and the *Teſts* (for Infants know nothing of the matter) and yet this Act of the Parents is imputed to their Children for their benefit and advantage.

An Infant is not capable to ſwear Allegiance, or to renounce Popery; and yet by the Parents ſo doing, it is made a Free born Subject of *England*: And as ſuch, is not only under the Protection of the Laws, but alſo may inherit *Lands* by *Deſcent.*

And thus it is in Spirituals. *Jews*, *Turks* and *Heathens*, are Strangers and Foreigners: And before they can be *Naturalized* as *Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God*, they muſt take the *Oaths* and the *Teſts*. In plain terms; Before they can be admitted into the Church, and have the Priviledges of Church-members, They muſt Profeſs to *Believe all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith*: They muſt promiſe *to keep God's holy Will and Commandments*: They *muſt renounce all their Spiritual Enemies*. But being thus admitted, then the Priviledge of Church-memberſhip (that Spiritual Naturalization) is not confined to the Perſon of the Parents, but is convey'd to their Children, who by this Profeſſion of the Parents, have a Right to thoſe *Church-Priviledges*, which the Infants of other Heathens and Aliens have, as yet, no ſuch Right or Title to.

This

This might further be explained to you, by considering the Proceedings in our *Corporations*, and *City-Companies* here in *London*; In which the Children of *Freemen* (as well as their Parents) do partake of such Priviledges as the Children of others (who are no *Freemen*) are not capable of.

These Things are plain and intelligible. But if men will not understand us, we cannot help it.

From these Premisses it appears, That Infants of Christian Parents are *Faithful*, and *Believers* and as such, *are in Covenant with God*; and are *Adopted*, and taken into God's Family the Church; whereby they have a Title to these following Blessings (as I now proceed to convince you.)

1. Pardon of Sin in this Life:
2. An Eternal Inheritance, and Portion of Glory in the next.

And *First*, Are not your Infants capable of Pardon of Sin?

Par. We leave them to God's Mercy.

Min. So we do Heathens. But this is too general and confuſed an Anſwer. Tell me therefore diſtinctly, Are not Infants guilty of Original Sin?

Par. *Our Firſt Parents being the root, and by God's appointment ſtanding in the room and ſtead of all Mankind, the Guilt of their Sin was imputed, and corrupted Nature conveyed, to all their Poſterity deſcending from them by ordinary generation; being now conceived in Sin, and by nature Children of Wrath. Vid.* Anabapt. Confeſſion of Faith, *p.* 24. *London*, Printed 1688.

Min. Is not this Original Sin Deadly and Damning even to Infants?

Par. *Infants being now conceived in Sin, and by Nature Children of Wrath, they are the Servants of Sin, the Subject of Death, and all other Miſeries, Spiritual, Temporal,*

and

and Eternal, unleſs the Lord Jeſus ſet them free. V. Confeſſion *ut ſupra.*

Min. Since then the Lord Jeſus doth *ſet Infants free*, he doth pardon and Abſolve them. And thus it doth appear from your own *Confeſſion*, that *Infants are capable of Pardon of Sin*?

Secondly, Are not Infants capable of an Eternal Inheritance, and Portion of Glory?

Par. *Theſe innocent Babes that have never acted Sin, are by our Saviour pronounced Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven*, V. Edw. Paye's *Juſt Reply* p. 20.

Min. I have now ſhewed you, that Infants are *capable* of being admitted Viſible Church-members under the Goſpel. And the Reaſon is, becauſe they are *Faithful* and *Believers* (for though Infants are not capable of actual Faith, yet they are Believers in God's eſteem and acceptation.

I have likewiſe ſuggeſted, that it is a very great *Bleſſing* to Infants ſo to be admitted. And this is ſo evident, that it doth not need any further Proof or Illuſtration: For is it not the greateſt Bleſſing to be in Covenant with God? To have the Lord for their God? Is it not the higheſt Priviledge to be adopted and admitted into God's Family the Church, thereby to be put into a State of Salvation (for *the Lord added to the Church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved*, Acts 2 47.) Is it not the richeſt mercy, to have Pardon of Sin, and to be Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven?

Now it being thus granted, that Infants are *capable* of being Church-members under the Goſpel: And it being ſo great a *Benefit* ſo to be admitted; If, I ſay, notwithſtanding this *Capacity* and *Advantage*, Infants ought not to be admitted Viſible Church-members; *then* the Reaſon why they ought

ought not ſo to be admitted, can be no other than this; *viz.* Becauſe *Chriſt the great Law-giver to the Goſpel Church, hath declared he will not admit them.*

This is the *Third* and laſt Particular to be conſidered. And becauſe it is the very hinge of the Controverſie, I ſhall examine it ſtrictly and impartially.

For the main Queſtion between us and the *Antipædobaptiſts*, is not, concerning an abſolute and expreſs Command for *Infant Baptiſm*, and *Church-memberſhip* (as our Brethren ſuggeſt) but the grand Queſtion is this; *viz.* Whether our Bleſſed Saviour hath ſo Determined the Subject of Baptiſm and Church-memberſhip, *i. e.* Whether he hath ſo confined Church-memberſhip to *Adult Perſons profeſſing the Faith*, that thereby he hath excluded *Infants* from *Church-memberſhip*, and conſequently from *Baptiſm*? I ſay, *conſequently from Baptiſm*;

Baptiſm; For ſince Baptiſm is the only *Rite* and *Inſtitution* whereby any perſon can be admitted a Church-member under the Goſpel; thoſe who are excluded from Church-memberſhip, are likewiſe excluded from Baptiſm; and thoſe who are admitted to Church-memberſhip, muſt alſo be admitted to Baptiſm. Now it muſt be granted; That our B. Saviour, the great Law-giver to the Goſpel-Church, had Power and Authority to limit and determine the Subject of Baptiſm and Church-memberſhip, *i. e.* He had Power to appoint who ſhould be admitted Members of his Church, and who ſhould be excluded. The Queſtion therefore, in ſhort, is this; *viz.* Whether he hath ſo far done it, and in ſuch manner determined it as to exclude Infants?

This is the true ſtate of the Controverſie. I demand therefore, Hath our B. Saviour excluded Infants

fants from being Church-members?

Par. *There was an old Law, wherein Infants were admitted to the Priviledges of being Members of the National Church of the Jews. But that Law was to continue but till Christ came; and now he has made a new Law, wherein Infant-Church-membership is quite left out*, V. *Keach* Gold Refined, p. 114

Min. You say then that *Infant-Church-membership is quite left out*, What do you mean by that Expression?

Par. I denote this, *viz.* That though Infants were admitted Church-members under the Law; yet now, under the Gospel, our B. Saviour hath declared, he will not admit them.

Min. If our B. Saviour hath declared, that Infants shall not be admitted Church-members under the Gospel; then this Declaration by which they are excluded, is either, 1. *Direct*

1. *Direct* and *Expreſs*. Or,

2. *Conſequential*, and by good Natural Deduction: But neither of theſe can be pretended.

And *Firſt*, I am ſure you cannot pretend, that there is a *Direct* and *Expreſs* Prohibition: If you ſay there is; then pray tell us where we may find it: In which of the Goſpels, or in what *Epiſtle*; in what *Chapter* or *Verſe* do you read it? But I never could 'find one word from the beginning 'of St. *Matthew*, to the end of the 'Revelations of St. *John* the Divine, 'that ſaith plainly, *ye ſhall not ſprinkle your Children*: No, nor that ſaith, '*that ye ſhall not Baptize your Infants*.

There is therefore no *Direct* or *Expreſs* Prohibition.

Par. However if there is but an *Implicit* or *Conſequential* Prohibition, you will then, I hope, acknowledge, that Infants are excluded.

Min. I might juſtly except againſt your Proof, For as you require

quire an expreſs Command to admit them; I may with greater Reaſon require an expreſs Prohibition to exclude them.

For ſince (as you have granted) Infants were formerly admitted Church-members under the Law; they ought likewiſe ſo to be admitted under the Goſpel (which is a Diſpenſation of more Grace and mercy) unleſs you can produce ſome Poſitive Law of Chriſt, whereby he doth exclude them. For nothing can make that unlawful *now* under the Goſpel) which was a Duty *before* (*under the Law*) but a Direct and Expreſs Prohibition from the Legiſlator himſelf; who alone hath Power to reſcind, as well as to make Laws.

But I ſhall not inſiſt upon this at preſent. I deny that there is ſo much as an *Implicit* or *Conſequential* Prohibition of Infants Church-memberſhip.

Par. I ſhall not doubt to prove

prove it from theſe *Two* Topicks.

1. From the Inſtitution of Baptiſm.

2. From the Qualifications and Conditions which are required, in the Goſpel, of all Perſons to be Baptized.

Min. Prove it *Firſt* from the Inſtitution of Baptiſm.

Par. *Firſt of all, it may be neceſſary to ſhew you, that this Ordinance was inſtituted and ordained by our Lord Jeſus, and given forth by him ſoon after he roſe from the dead, and a little before he aſcended into Heaven*; ſee *Mat.* 28. 18, 19, 20. *Mark.* 16. 16. And Jeſus came and ſpake unto them, ſaying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghoſt. Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: And lo, I am with you alway even unto the

the end of the world. Amen. *Theſe are the words of the great Commiſſion —— wherein Baptiſm is found and expreſly given forth*, Vid. *Keach* Gold Refined, *p.* 2.

Min. Were it pertinent I could convince you, that theſe words, *Mat.* 28. 18, 19. *&c.* are not the Inſtitution of Baptiſm; or the firſt Commiſſion, as you ſuppoſe. For 'tis evident that our Saviour's Diſciples did Baptize, and make Diſciples in the life-time of their Maſter, and before his Paſſion. Which doubtleſs they did by his Order and Appointment. Theſe words therefore are not the Inſtitution of Baptiſm, but only an enlargement of the firſt Commiſſion. For whereas, at firſt, our B. Saviour declares, *he was not ſent but to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael*, Mat. 15. 24. And commands his Diſciples (when he ſent them out to make Proſelytes) *Go not into the way of the Gentiles*, Mat. 10. 5. He now enlargeth

enlargeth their Commiſſion, *Go and Teach*, or Proſelyte and Diſciple *all Nations*, Gentiles as well as Jews.

But to paſs by this miſtake, I deny that this Text doth exclude Infants from Church-memberſhip, and conſequently from Baptiſm.

Par. Pray is there a word of Infants in this Text? Is there the leaſt notice of them? And can you fancy, had it been the mind of Jeſus Chriſt to Baptize them, and admit them into his Church, that he would not plainly have told us ſo in this great Commiſſion? *Can any thing reflect more upon the honour of Chriſt*, &c. *than this? as if he ſhould neglect to ſpeak out his Mind and Will to us plainly?* V. *Keach* Gold Refined, *p.* 96.

Min. All theſe warm Expoſtulations do ſignifie little. For pray, can you pretend that Infants are excluded becauſe they are not mentioned? If ſo, then *Women* are

are excluded. For *Women* are no more mentioned in this laſt Commiſſion, than *Infants*. Nor are *Infants* any more excluded than *Women*. For your Conviction I'll repeat the Words: *Go and Diſciple all Nations, Baptizing them.* Now who are theſe that are to be made Diſciples by Baptiſm? Are not *all Nations*? And are not *All* of all Nations, *Infants* as well as Men and Women? That this laſt Commiſſion is thus to be underſtood, would be very intelligible, had it been deliver'd in this Form, *Go, Proſelyte all Nations, Circumciſing them*, &c. Had Circumciſion been ſtill in force, and (inſtead of Baptiſm) had it been the Rite of Admiſſion into the Chriſtian Church; I appeal to your own Judgment and Reaſon, whether in ſuch a Form of Words it could be imagined, that the Infants of ſuch *Gentile Proſelytes* ſhould be excluded Circumciſion. What

reaſon therefore can there be, from theſe words, to imagine that our Saviour did intend to exclude the Infants of Gentile-Converts from Baptiſm? Since they are as capable of Baptiſm, as Circumciſion, and ſince Baptiſm is as beneficial to them as Circumciſion?

Par. But though Infants are not excluded by name (no more are Bells, V. *Keach.* Gold Refined, *p.* 148.) Yet they are excluded in the reaſon of the thing. As appears from theſe *Two* Conſiderations.

1. From the Order of the Words.

2. From the Qualifications and Conditions which are required in the Goſpel, (not only in this Text but in other Places) of all Perſons to be baptized. Of which Qualifications ſince Infants are not capable, they are conſequently excluded.

Min.

Min. I'll endeavour your Satisfaction in theſe *Two* particulars. And *Firſt*, How do you prove from the order of the words, in this laſt Commiſſion, that Infants are excluded from Church-membership, and conſequently from Baptiſm?

Par. *Obſerve what is Antecedent to Baptiſm: Teach all Nations. There muſt be Teaching: They muſt be firſt Taught, or made Diſciples,—and next baptize them. V.* Keach *Gold Refined*, p. 65. *When Chriſt layeth down the Apoſtolical Commiſſion, the nature and order of the Apoſtles work, it is firſt to make them Diſciples, and then to baptize them in the name*, &c. Id. p. 74. *The Lord Jeſus hath plainly excluded Infants, in his Commiſſion, from this Adminiſtration according to ordinary Rule. For in that he commands them to baptize Diſciples, upon Preaching firſt to them, it follows that none but ſuch who are ſo Taught, and ſo*

by Teaching made Diſciples, are by vertue of the Commiſſion to be baptized, id. p. 88.

Min. *The word* μαθητευσατε, *as is well known and confeſſed by all, doth ſignifie to Diſcipulize, or make Diſciples,* V. *Keach* Gold Refined, p. 65. And therefore is very ill Tranſlated *Teach.* Which having duly conſider'd, you muſt then acknowledge, that the force of your Argument, from the order of the words, is plainly loſt. For the Text, when rightly Tranſlated, is thus; *Go and Diſciple all Nations baptizing them,—Teaching them to obſerve all things,* &c. Here is indeed a *Teaching*, but it is ſubſequent to their Diſcipleſhip and their Baptiſm. *Firſt*, make all Nations my Diſciples by Baptiſm, *then* Teach them, *&c.* A Child may be admitted into a School, and may be called the Diſciple and Scholar of ſuch a Maſter, before he hath been actually taught one

Letter

Letter in his Book. So that, I ſay, this Text, if rightly Tranſlated, is rather againſt you than for you.

But ſuppoſing the Tranſlation were proper. *Go, Teach all Nations, baptizing them.* Doth it hence follow. That none are to be Baptized, but ſuch who are firſt Taught?

Indeed when Nations were firſt Converted to the Chriſtian Faith, we readily grant that thoſe who were capable of Teaching, ſhould be firſt Taught, and then Baptized. Aliens and Infidels of grown Age (and to ſuch the Apoſtles were ſent) muſt be firſt Taught and inſtructed, before they are received into the Chriſtian Church. For ſince Religion is a rational Service, no Adult Perſon ought to be admitted without his own Perſonal Conſent.

But what is this to the Caſe of Infants? Doth it follow, that becauſe Adult Perſons, who are capable of Inſtruction, muſt be

firſt Taught before they are Baptized, *Therefore* Infants, who are incapable to be Taught, muſt be rejected? I'll convince you by this Parallel Caſe. Suppoſe this Commiſſion were given to certain Divines of the Church of *England*. *Go, and Diſciple the Indians.* What method would thoſe Miſſioners take? Would they not firſt Preach the Goſpel? And when Adult Perſons, of Capacity and Underſtanding, had received and embraced it, would they not then baptize them? But when this was done, and that the Parents were admitted upon their own Perſonal Profeſſion; can any one imagine that theſe Miſſioners would refuſe their Infants? I ſay, can any one conceive, that it is the intention of ſuch a Commiſſion to exclude the Infants of all thoſe *Indians* from Baptiſm, when it is well known, that Infant-Baptiſm is uſed and practiſed amongſt us here in *England*,

England, from whom this Commiſſion came?

In like manner, ſince *Infant-Church membership* was the known practice amongſt the *Jews*, can you fancy that the *Apoſtles* would reject it? Was that a proper method to Proſelyte the Nations, and to invite either Jews or Gentiles to become *Chriſtians*? Do you not read in the Goſpel how zealous the *Jewiſh Chriſtians* were for *Circumciſion*? And ſince they were ſo much offended at the neglect of it, *Acts* 21. 21. can you in reaſon think, they ſhould quietly bear their *Childrens* being wholly thrown out of the *Church*; as they would have been, if neither admitted to Circumciſion nor Baptiſm?

Par. Whatever you can ſay to the contrary, the Inference from *Mat.* 28. upon ſtrict examination, will appear ſound and firm; eſpecially if you take in *Mark* 16. 16. Where the great Commiſſion is likewiſe

wiſe recorded. *He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved, but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* Do you not obſerve the order of the words in both Texts? Firſt *Teach*, then *Baptize*. Firſt *Believeth*, then *Baptized*. *From hence it is evident that thoſe who ought to be baptized are Diſciples, and none elſe. And that a Diſciple is one that is a Believer; one that is Taught, or has learned of Chriſt*, V. Keach *Gold Refined*, p. 67.

Min. If Doctrines collected from the order of words are always ſound and good, and Arguments thence drawn concluſive; I can then undeniably prove (in contradiction to your Practice) that Diſciples ought firſt to be Baptized, and then Taught. *John did baptize in the wilderneſs, and preach the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins*, Mark. 1. 4. Obſerve, firſt he *Baptized*, and then he *Preached*.

Par. But thoſe that *John* did Baptize, were ſuch as confeſſed their ſins.

Min.

Min. However *John's* Baptizing, went before their confeſſing. For ſo it follows *v.* 5. *There went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jeruſalem, and were all baptized of him in the River of Jordan*, confeſſing *their ſins.* Take notice, firſt you have his *Baptizing*, and after their *Confeſſing*.

I might ſhew you, from other Places of Scripture, how impertinent it is to argue from the Order of Words. Gal. 5 22. *Love, Joy, Peace*, &c. are mentioned before *Faith.* 2 *Cor.* 13. 14. The ſecond Perſon is mentioned before the firſt. *Rom.* 10. 9. *Confeſſion with the Mouth* is named before *believing with the heart.* Ezek. 14. 14. *Daniel* is named before *Job*, who notwithſtanding was long after him in time. From theſe inſtances, to omit many others, you may obſerve, That nothing is more frequent or familiar in the Scriptures, than to find ſuch things mentioned or named in the

the firſt Place, which according to the order of nature, and ſometimes of time it ſelf, ſhould be mentioned after.

If you are not yet ſatisfied in this Point, I ſhall then undeniably convince you from *Mark.* 16. 16. which place of Scripture I ſhall therefore inſiſt upon, becauſe your *Baptiſt Writers* do uſually repeat it with a kind of Triumph, as if it were ſelf-evident, and the very Pillar of your Cauſe.

Par. Are not the words very plain? *He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* Is not *Believing* here ſet before *Baptizing?* He doth not ſay, he that is *Baptized* and *Believeth*, but he that *Believeth* and is *Baptized* ſhall be Saved.

Min. What do you infer from hence?

Par. I infer, That Believing muſt go before Baptizing; and none muſt

muſt be Baptized, but thoſe who firſt Believe.

Min. To this I anſwer in the words of the Learned *Dr. Walker.*

'If none muſt be *Baptized*, but 'he that *Believes*, becauſe Believing is ſet firſt, then none muſt 'be *Saved* but he that is Baptized, 'becauſe Baptizing is ſet firſt. And 'then, what better Argument can 'be made for Infants Baptiſm? 'They muſt be Baptized if we 'will have them Saved; becauſe 'they cannot be Saved without 'being Baptized; for *Baptizing* 'goes before *Saving*. And yet 'from the ſame Text, and by the 'ſame way of Arguing, it may 'be proved (contrary to what the '*Anabaptiſts* ſay of the Univerſal 'Salvation of all Infants dying 'before the commiſſion of actual 'Sin) that no Infants are Saved 'but thoſe that believe; becauſe '*Believing* is ſet before being *Saved:*

'*ved*: And not only ſo, but 'whereas it is not ſaid, *He that be-* '*lieveth* not *ſhall* not *be Baptized*; 'it is ſaid, *He that believeth not* '*ſhall be damned.* V. Modeſt Plea, '&c. *p.* 179.

I hope you are now convinced of your miſtake in arguing againſt Infant-Baptiſm, from the Order of the Words.

Par. But ſuppoſe this Argument, from the Order of the Words, may be evaded; there is another Argument (drawn from the Qualifications and Conditions required in the Goſpel, of all Perſons to be Baptized) not ſo eaſily Anſwered.

Min. Pray let me hear that Argument in its full ſtrength.

Par. I know not how to pleaſe you better, than by giving it in the words of the Church of *England*; as I thus find it in your Church Catechiſm.

Q. *What*

Q. *What is required of Perſons to be Baptized?*

A. *Repentance, whereby they forſake Sin; and Faith, whereby they ſtedfaſtly believe the Promiſes of God made to them in that Sacrament.*

Min. What do you prove from theſe words of the Church-Catechiſm?

Par. I infer, That *foraſmuch as Infants cannot have either Faith or Repentance, which is required by the Lord, of all Perſons to be Baptized, (as is manifeſtly proved by the Scriptures, and alſo granted by the Pleaders for the Baptiſm of Infants, in the Catechiſm afore recited) it muſt needs be concluded, That Infants are no meet Subjects of Baptiſm; and ſo by conſequence it muſt needs follow, that the Baptiſm of Infants is none of the Lord's Baptiſm.* V. A. R. *Vanity of Childiſh Baptiſm.* p. 25.

Min.

Min. That *Faith and Repentance are required of Perſons to be Baptized*, I readily grant. 'Tis the Doctrine of the H. Scriptures, as well as the Church of *England*. But that *Faith and Repentance are required of* All *Perſons to be Baptized*, I flatly deny: This is neither the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, nor of the Church of *England*. The word *All* is an addition of your own, and is not to be found in any Edition of the Church-Catechiſm.

By this diſcovery, the weakneſs of your Argument doth thus plainly appear.

Faith and Repentance are required of Perſons to be Baptized. Not univerſally of *All* Perſons, but indefinitely of *Perſons*, i. e. of ſuch Perſons as are capable of Faith and Repentance. So that the utmoſt which can be infer'd from theſe Words of the Church-Catechiſm is this, *viz.* That it is required

quired of Adult Perſons, who have Diſcretion and Underſtanding, that they make a Perſonal Profeſſion of Faith and Repentance before they are Baptized. But pray, what is this to the Caſe of Infants? Though Faith and Repentance are required of ſome Perſons (*viz.* of thoſe who are Adult) before they are Baptized, yet there are other Perſons (*viz.* Infants) who may be Baptized without them.

If you do not yet underſtand me, I thus hope to convince you.

Faith and *Repentance* are as neceſſary to *Salvation* as they are to *Baptiſm*; and are as much required of Perſons to be *Saved*, as of Perſons to be *Baptized*. But will you hence infer, That becauſe Infants are not yet capable of Faith and Repentance, *therefore* they are not capable of Salvation?

For

For your clearer Conviction, I propoſe theſe following Queſtions and Anſwers.

Q. *What is required of Perſons to be Saved?*

A. *Repentance, whereby they forſake Sin; and Faith, whereby they ſtedfaſtly believe the Promiſes of God made to them in the Goſpel.*

Q. *How then can Infants be Saved, when by reaſon of their tender Age they cannot perform them?* They can neither Believe nor Repent; *therefore*, according to your Doctrine, they cannnot be Saved. What anſwer do you give to this?

Par. *Did ever man ſpeak more impertinently? What! cannot I ſpeak to the Adult and ſay*, Unleſs you Repent you ſhall all periſh; *but I muſt intend Infants, who are not capable of it? And* except you Believe you ſhall be Damned. *And when I ſay*, He that ſowes to the fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap cor-

corruption, *but muſt intend* Infants? *Surely the Doctrine of the Goſpel was never calculated for Infants.* V. *H. Collins* Antidote, *p.* 10.

But why do you ſay Children muſt be Believers, or elſe they cannot be Saved? Who told you ſo? Becauſe Faith in Adult Perſons is required as neceſſary in them, if they are ſaved; Cannot God ſave poor Infants without they *alſo do Believe? Hath God told you he cannot, or will not ſave them except they Believe? I muſt confeſs I wonder at your Ignorance and daring boldneſs.* God, as Dr. *Taylor obſerves*, may have many ways to magnifie his Grace through Jeſus Chriſt, to them which we know not of, *p.* 230. *And what have you to do with the ſecrets of God? Who made you one of his Privy-Council? You may as well ſay*, Unleſs they repent they cannot be Saved, *from Chriſt's words*, Luke 13. 3, 5. *And that*

they muſt be obedient and take up the Croſs: For theſe things are required of Adult Perſons that would be ſaved, as well as Believing. V. Keach *Gold refined, p.* 143.

Min. You have now Anſwered your ſelf; and you have done it fully.

For why do you ſay Children muſt be Believers, or elſe they cannot be Baptized? Who told you ſo? Becauſe Faith in Adult Perſons is required as neceſſary to Baptiſm; Cannot God admit poor Infants to Baptiſm, unleſs *they* alſo do Believe? Hath God told you he cannot, or will not admit them except they Believe? I muſt confeſs I wonder at your Ignorance and daring Boldneſs.

For you have been told, with the greateſt plainneſs, That when the Goſpel doth mention *Faith* and *Repentance*, as Conditions of Church-membership and Baptiſm, it doth not ſpeak to Infants; it doth

doth not propoſe theſe Conditions to Infants; for, in your Language, *the Goſpel was never calculated for Infants.* But it ſpeaks to Adult Perſons, who have *Ears to Hear*, i. e. Who have Capacity to Underſtand and Obey it.

But as for Infants; They are received into the Church, by Baptiſm, upon another account; even from the Mercy and Favour of God, whoſe conſtant method it is to prevent us with his Grace; and who hath eſtabliſhed his Covenant with the Faithful, not only in their own Perſons, but with their Seed after them. As I have more fully explained in this Diſcourſe; which I heartily commend to your ſerious Peruſal, and God's Bleſſing.

Par. Though *we are fully perſwaded, That what we do is agreeable to the Will of God; yet we do heartily propoſe this, That if any of the Servants of our Lord Jeſus*

Christ, shall in the spirit of meekness, attempt to convince us of any mistake, either in Judgment or Practice, we shall diligently ponder his Arguments; and account him our chiefest Friend, That shall be an Instrument to Convert us from any Error that is in our Ways. Vid. Append. to Anabaptists Confession, *p.* 112.

Min. This Resolution of yours is very Christian and Pious. God grant that you may Practice accordingly.

FINIS.

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